

it and urge my colleagues to join in doing the same.

Mr. CONDIT. Chairman, I move to strike the last word to speak in favor of the amendment.

I want to rise and show my support for the amendment, and I would like to commend the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. DAVIS) and the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. MORAN) for being on their toes and being on guard for State government.

This is an amendment that is needed for the State governments, and I just commend them and congratulate them for doing this.

□ 2215

Mr. PORTMAN. Mr. Chairman, I move to strike the requisite number of words just briefly again to commend sponsors of this amendment.

We did work with the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. MORAN) last time around and were not able to do what really should have been done, it turned out. This is a needed technical correction really to the 1995 legislation, because it clarifies the intent of the original act to make it clear that State and local government could be given newer, expanded authority to meet their programmatic responsibilities if additional costs were imposed on them through entitlement reform.

So I want to thank the authors of the amendment and also echo what the gentleman from California (Mr. CONDIT) has said and issue my strong support.

Mr. DREIER. Mr. Chairman, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. PORTMAN. I yield to the gentleman from California.

Mr. DREIER. Mr. Chairman, I thank my friend for yielding.

I would just like to offer an addendum to the very thoughtful list of supporters that was provided by the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. DAVIS), and say that I suspect not many Members are aware of the fact that the International City-County Management Association, which is headed by Gary Gwinn, also strongly supports the Davis-Moran amendment.

The CHAIRMAN. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. DAVIS).

The amendment was agreed to.

Mr. DREIER. Mr. Chairman, I move that the Committee do now rise.

The motion was agreed to.

Accordingly, the Committee rose; and the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. PORTMAN) having assumed the chair, Mr. SESSIONS, Chairman of the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union, reported that that Committee, having had under consideration the bill (H.R. 3534) to improve congressional deliberation on proposed Federal private sector mandates, and for other purposes, had come to no resolution thereon.

#### GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. DREIER. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members

may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and provide extraneous material on H.R. 3534.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from California?

There was no objection.

#### SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. SESSIONS). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 7, 1997, and under a previous order of the House, the following Members will be recognized for 5 minutes each.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. FOX) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. FOX of Pennsylvania addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. MCINNIS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. MCINNIS addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from North Carolina (Mrs. CLAYTON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mrs. CLAYTON addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

#### FREEDOM FROM RELIGIOUS PERSECUTION ACT OF 1998

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New York (Mr. HOUGHTON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. HOUGHTON. Mr. Speaker, I would like to talk for a minute about a bill that we will be voting on tomorrow, and that is called the Freedom From Religious Persecution Act of 1998. The number is H.R. 2431.

This has gone through the Committee on International Relations. I was on that committee. I voted against it, and it has gone to the Committee on Ways and Means for a particular issue of a sequential referral.

I understand why people are concerned with persecution of individuals and various religions throughout this world, and many times it is out of a sense of compassion for these people. And yet at the same time, I think that there are ways of handling this which I do not think are being recognized here.

What this bill will do, and I know things have been changing rather rapidly in terms of the terminology, is, it will establish an Office of Religious Persecution Monitoring. Think of it, an Office of Religious Persecution

Monitoring in our government. And that man who is in charge of that office will then recommend, in his own infinite wisdom, to the Secretary of State whether persecution is taking place throughout the world.

There are various categories involved here. I will not go into the specifics, but the important thing is that if a country has been decided to be involved in religious persecution in any way, whether this is tribal or whether this is two religions, whether the country has no control over it whatsoever, that country will then have a denial of United States foreign assistance, it will be subject to various trade sanctions, denial of visas, prohibition of exports, U.S. support for multilateral bank assistance, and a whole variety of different things. I think that is the wrong way of going about it.

We all in our own way and our own sense have a feeling of religion inside us, and we do not want to see anybody persecute it. The question is, really, who are the beneficiaries of this? I have talked to members of the Russian Orthodox Church. I have talked to the people who are in charge of the religious expression of a variety of different sects in Sudan. I have been to India. I have been to Zimbabwe. I have talked really recently to the National Council of Churches.

And whether it was in the Middle East or whether it was somebody who represented 27 million Muslims in Indonesia, I asked the question, "Who wants this?" The letters that we see supporting this particular act all come out of New York or Washington. None come from abroad. "Who wants this?" And there was not a single affirmative answer in that whole group.

So what we were doing, therefore, was literally imposing sort of a post-colonial Western sense of what is right and what is wrong on the peoples of this world. And in many cases, the governments have absolutely no control over what the religious persecution is. I know this is true in terms of Sudan. I know it is true in terms of a variety of other countries. And by the United States imposing its will upon those countries, those areas, which they really know very little about, they are going to be hurting more people than they are going to be helping.

So the question is, who are the intended beneficiaries? Not many. Billy Graham does not think this is a good idea. The Dalai Lama does not think this is a good idea. The Council of Churches does not think this is a good idea. A variety of organizations, such as the American Farm Bureau, does not think it is a good idea.

Why are we doing this? I think we are doing this out of a sense of compassion, but misdirected compassion.

It is wrong for us to set ourselves up as the arbiter of what goes on in a country. As much as we have a feeling for this thing, we must be very, very careful not to superimpose our own standards on the rest of the world, particularly when it involves something so